

# Moving From Serving Needs to Developing Capabilities

- “Service” focuses on problems  
“Development” focuses on assets and capabilities
- “Service” is episodic  
“Development” is ongoing
- “Service” reinforces power imbalances from giver to receiver  
“Development” equalizes power relationships
- “Service” promotes passivity  
“Development” promotes capabilities and initiatives
- “Service” relies on “experts”  
“Development” relies on partnerships
- “Service” emphasizes recipient ownership of problems  
“Development” emphasizes mutual ownership of possibilities
- “Service” keeps recipients isolated and dependent  
“Development” links people with shared interests and promotes leadership
- “Service” looks at what is missing  
“Development” builds on community assets
- “Service” meets needs  
“Development” fuels abilities
- “Service” maintains conditions  
“Development” changes conditions
- “Service” expects no contributions to others  
“Development” requires contributions
- “Service” leaves people just served  
“Development” leaves people more skilled
- “Service” is reactive  
“Development” is proactive



## Circles of Success Communities of Strength

The traditional approach to serving families has been through the delivery of services. Rarely have we thought about building the power and capability of people and communities. A traditional service approach emphasizes power imbalances and deficiencies from a superior provider to a needy recipient. A development approach starts with the belief in **strength and capacities**. A development approach seeks to build those capacities and to build power so people are fully capable not fully served. A development approach works so communities themselves are changed intentionally - their strengths are recognized and developed so that conditions that affect people are improved.

**Community development seeks to change conditions that affect people rather than changing people who are affected by conditions.**